

Appl. No. 09/902,160
Amdt. dated January 24, 2006
Reply to Office Action of October 24, 2005

Remarks

The present amendment responds to the final Official Action dated October 24, 2005. The final Official Action objected to claim 18 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but was indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claims 1-7 and 10-16 were rejected under U.S.C. § 102(b) based on Hirano U.S. Patent No. 5,608,804 (Hirano). Claims 8, 9, and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on Hirano. Claim 1 has been canceled without prejudice. Claims 2, 4-7, and 9 have been amended to depend from claim 18. Claim 10 has been amended to be more clear and distinct and claim 18 has been rewritten in independent form. Claims 2-18 are presently pending.

The Art Rejections

As addressed in greater detail below, Hirano does not support the Examiner's reading of it and the rejections based thereupon should be reconsidered and withdrawn. Further, the Applicant does not acquiesce in the analysis of Hirano made by the Examiner and respectfully traverses the Examiner's analysis underlying its rejections.

The Examiner objected to claim 18 as being dependent upon the rejected base claim 1, but indicated claim 18 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim 1. Claim 1 has been canceled and claim 18 has been amended in independent form placing it in order for allowance. Claims 2, 4-7, and 9 have been amended to depend from claim 18. The Examiner rejected claim 10 based on the rejection of claim 1. Claim

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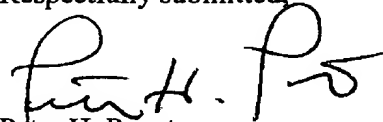
10 has been amended to incorporate a method step limitation similar to the limitation found in claim 18 placing it in order for allowance.

Since dependent claims 2-9 depend from and contain all the limitations of the amended claim 18, claims 2-9 distinguish from Hirano in the same manner as claim 18 and place claims 2-9 in order for allowance. Since dependent claims 11-17 depend from and contain all the limitations of the amended claim 10, claims 11-17 distinguish from Hirano in the same manner as claim 10 and place claims 11-17 in order for allowance.

Conclusion

All of the presently pending claims, as amended, appearing to define over the applied references, withdrawal of the present rejection and prompt allowance are requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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